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On Covenanting with God.

(Continued from p. 406.)

PART III.

An Address to professing Christians.

DEAR BRETHREN,
THE people of God are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, designed to show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light. That they might act up to this high character, it is commanded that they should exhort one another daily : That they should consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works.* They should consider the relation they stand in to each other, as brethren in Christ ; as under indispensable obligations to him, and to one another. They should consider their mutual dangers, temptations, weaknesses and tears, and counsel and warn each other against sin, encourage, assist and stimulate one

another to every Christian duty. They should walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise redeeming the time. They are commanded not only to exhort one another daily, but to do it so much the more as they see the day approaching.† Time is short, and flies away with rapid wing. The awful day of death and judgment is swiftly approaching : A day in which the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the world and all that is in it shall be burnt up : A day in which all things shall be made manifest ; when all men shall be rewarded according to their works, and time and opportunities shall be no more. This awful, this momentous day is constantly approaching. It comes nearer every hour and moment ; whether we sleep or wake, whether we stand all the day idle, or whether we enter into our master's vineyard, and do the work to which he hath called us. He commands that we exhort and press one another daily to grow in grace and knowledge,

* Hebrews x. 24.

† Hebrews x. 25.

and to discharge all covenant duties, in proportion to the swift and near approach of that day in which we shall all stand together, before the judgment seat of Christ. Our love, faithfulness, zeal and energy, in pressing each other to duty, and in performing all our covenant obligations, should increase, and rise higher and higher as the day of death and judgment is approaching. This duty, this brotherly and kind office, the writer has been attempting to perform in the preceding papers, on covenanting with God; and is now still further attempting to fulfil, in this address. This will naturally follow what hath been written on that subject, and serve further to stimulate us to the duties already suggested. It behoves him to exhort you in realizing views of the day which is approaching, of its near and hasty approach to himself and you, and of its immense, eternal consequences to us both. It is of high concern to you to receive this brotherly exhortation in the love of the truth, and in the near and realizing views of death and the judgment day, and to be quickened and animated to all holy living, so much the more as ye see the day approaching. The belief of such a day, how it approaches, what a day it will be, and what its eternal consequences, should awaken, in every breast, the highest concern to keep covenant with God; to be circumspect, prayerful, sober, vigilant, steadfast, immoveable always abounding in the work of the Lord. The apostle, having spoken of this day and its concomitant events, observes, What manner of persons ought we to be in all

holy conversation and godliness? Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.* In this day the secrets of the heart will be revealed, and judged according to the gospel. Every deceit and specious pretence will be detected, and every mask and false covering removed; and how we have payed, or neglected to pay our vows will be made manifest, to our exceeding joy and triumph, or shame and contempt, before assembled worlds. No pleas of fair professions, of distinguishing privileges, of offices and high standing in the church, of common or extraordinary gifts, without grace, will be of the least avail. Unless we are born of God, united to Christ by faith, and live godly in Christ Jesus, the door will be shut against us, and no pleas will ever avail to open it. What solemn and deeply affecting admonitions hath our Lord and Judge given us of this? Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.† When once the master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door.

* 2^d Peter iii. 11, 14.

† Matthew vii. 21, 22.

saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are: Then shall ye begin to say, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you I know you not whence you are: depart from me all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of heaven, and ye yourselves thrust out.* How should premonitions like these, penetrate the heart of every professor, of every minister, and of church officers as well as common Christians? Since persons so distinguished by gifts and privileges, and of such high standing in the church, shall thus be disowned by Christ, and shut out of his kingdom, how should it engage all to work out their salvation with fear and trembling? To be in an agony to enter in at the strait gate? To watch and pray always that they may be counted worthy to stand before the Son of man? Suffer me, dear brethren, to plead this with you by the solemnities of that day when we shall stand together at the judgment seat of Christ. How dignifying and blissful, will it then be, to be found among those whose hearts have been found in God's statutes and steadfast in his covenant? But who can bear to be thrust out of the kingdom of God, and to dwell for ever where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth?

At the same time, be intreated by the will of God and com-

mands of our divine Redeemer. It is written, this is the will of God, even your sanctification.* Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.† Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.‡ This is a faithful saying, and this I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works.|| God requires that his people should be eminent in holiness, abounding in every good word and work. Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.§ That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.¶ Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.** This is the express language of the divine word, and do we profess ourselves to be the sons of God, and that Jesus Christ is our Lord, and shall we not obey him? How can we pretend to love him, or to be his disciples if we keep not his words? How can we stand before him in the judgment, if we despise his commandments?

The faithfulness of God in keeping covenant with his people, and the excellency of the covenant which he hath made with them, as everlasting, ordered in all things and sure, furnish further and endearing motives to activity and fidelity, in keep-

* Luke xiii. 25, 26, 27, 28.

* 1 Thess. iv. 3. † Levit. xix. 2.

‡ 2 Tim. ii. 19. || Titus iii. 8.

§ Matt. v. 16. ¶ Phil. ii. 15.

** Matt. v. 48.

ing covenant with him. He is the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.* Hence his people should be faithful in keeping covenant with him. They are under indispensable obligations to imitate him as dear children. The excellency, wonderful grace and perpetuity of the covenant, render the violation of it most ungrateful, inexcusable and abominable.

Further, our blessed Saviour was faithful to us, in the great work of our redemption. No poverty, shame, nor agonies of the garden or of the cross could divert him a moment from pursuing his Father's honor and the good of his people. He is still the same faithful Redeemer. He lives for ever interceding for us, and governing all things for the good of them who love him. Shall we not be faithful to him, and walk even as he also walked?

Further, shall not the great love of God and our Lord Jesus Christ constrain us to a cheerful and universal obedience? The love of God in devising a way of recovery for lost men, in which he might consistently enter into covenant with them, in giving his only begotten Son from his bosom, to purchase the blessings of the covenant, and in his condescension to become a covenant God and Father to them, is without parallel. It passeth all understanding. The love of Christ in laying down his life for the sheep, and in purchasing the immense blessings of the new covenant, for his people, exceed-

eth all calculation. It has in it every thing attractive and endearing. It should constrain us to a most strict, constant and cheerful obedience to the whole will of God. The apostle Paul besought the Christians of his day by the mercies of God, That they should present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God: which he insisted was but their reasonable service.* From this consideration, That Christians were not their own, but bought with a price, he preseth it upon them to glorify God in their body, and in their spirit, which were God's.† This is his language to us, to all the churches and disciples of Christ. It is the language of the love of God the Father, and of the dying love of our Lord Jesus Christ. This love, these mercies of God, constrained the apostles and primitive Christians to a life of wonderful self-denial, patience, fortitude and holy living. They loved not their lives even unto death, that they might obey, honor and enjoy Christ. Can we imagine that we indeed love him and are his disciples, or expect to share with them, in the inheritance of all things, if the love of Christ have not, in some good measure, the same effect upon us? Can we believe that he hath loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own blood; that he hath delivered us from the wrath to come, made us the sons of God and heirs of all things, and not deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world? Have we this hope, and shall we not purify ourselves even as Christ is pure?

* Deuteronomy vii. 9.

* Rom. xii. 1. † 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

Again, Christians may be pressed to live godly in Christ Jesus, from the purpose for which they were chosen in Christ, from the grand design of his death, of their effectual calling and of the gospel, to make them holy in heart and life. They were all chosen in Christ, to be conformed to his image, and to be holy and without blame before him. And whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of his Son.* According as he hath chosen us in him, from the foundation of the world; that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.† The death of Christ was for the same purpose, the sanctification of the church: That the saints might perfect holiness in the fear of God. It is written, Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. Even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.‡ Christians are also called to be holy. Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling.§ The grand design of the gospel, as it respects the saints, is their sanctification. For this its teachers, ordinary and extraordinary, were given; for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.* Shall we in these views, live in a loose, careless manner? Can we be willing to counteract the design of our election, of the death of Christ, of our effectual calling, and of the gospel? Can any true Christian do this? Certainly he cannot. Who ever does it has an evidence in him that he is an hypocrite, and that he hath no part, nor inheritance among the saints. How should these considerations awaken all our concern to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, and, like the apostle, forgetting the things which are behind, to press toward the mark for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus?

Further, the glory of God, the honor of Christianity, and the salvation of our fellow men are highly concerned in the inoffensive and holy walking of professors. Nothing so dishonors God, injures the cause of Christianity, opens the mouths of infidels and blasphemers against God and our holy religion, and puts such a stumbling block in the way of men's believing, as the loose, unholy walking of professing Christians. This furnisheth infidels with one of their most artful and plausible arguments against the religion of Jesus. Loose and scandalous professors are some of the most grievous enemies of Christ and the gospel. They are the Judases, who, in his own visible family, betray him and his dear.

* Rom. viii. 29. † Ephes. i. 4.

‡ Ephes. v. 25, 26, 27.

§ 2 Tim. i. 9.

* Ephes. iv. 11, 12, 13.

est interests. The apostle Paul therefore, in his day, testified against them, even weeping, that they were the enemies of the cross of Christ, and that their end is destruction.* The unholy lives of those who have professed the Christian religion, have probably done more dishonor to the Saviour, and been a greater injury to the church than all the bloody persecutions which have been raised against it. Can any of us be willing to act this ungrateful, perfidious part, and to be brought forth at last to the perdition of ungodly men?

On the other hand, when professors live godly in Christ Jesus, it does great honor to God and to the gospel, and puts a wonderful beauty upon the churches. Hence our Saviour hath testified, Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.† This shows the excellency of religion, that it is heavenly and divine. Its effects on individuals and on society in their piety, righteousness, sobriety, humility, peaceableness, and in whatever is lovely and of good report, show that its author is God, and bring the highest honor to him. It gives others conviction of the truth of the gospel, and causes them, while the light of true Christians shines before them, to glorify our Father who is in heaven. The self-denial, patience, fortitude and holy lives of the apostles, and primitive Christians was one of the principal external means, in their day, of bringing men to the belief of the truth. It is still equally important and necessary, to promote the same end. What powerful motives should

these therefore be to persuade us to live wholly to God? He admits his people into covenant with him, that they might cleave unto him, and be unto him for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory.‡ He hath commanded that we conduct ourselves in such a manner, as that he may in all things be glorified: That whether we eat, or drink, or whatsoever we do, we do all to the glory of God.|| Jesus Christ humbled himself unto death that his Father might be glorified, and sinners saved. This was the language of his heart when his soul was troubled, and sorrowful unto death, Father, glorify thyself. He chose rather to suffer the agonies of the garden, the shameful and cursed death of the cross, than that his Father should not be glorified, and than that lost men should not be saved. Can we be his unless the same spirit be in us? Can we be his disciples if we regard not his glory, the honor of his gospel and the advancement of his kingdom? These lie near the heart of God and our Lord Jesus Christ. They are of great consideration with all those who keep covenant with God. Let me then, dear brethren, plead with you, the honor of the Redeemer, his glorious example, the honor and advancement of Christianity, the encouragement, edification and comfort of your brethren in Christ, and the conviction and salvation of those who believe not, to engage you in a most strict, zealous and persevering walk with God. Suffer me to plead with you all the solemn and weighty considerations suggested in these papers on coven-

* Phil. iii. 18, 19. † John xv. 8.

‡ Jer. xiii. 11. || 1 Pet. iv. 11.

anting, and keeping covenant with God.

And what shall I say more ? Shall I plead with you the happy effect which this would have upon our churches ? That it would cause them to look forth as the morning ; make them beautiful as Tirzah and comely as Jerusalem : That this would engage the presence of God with them, to comfort, edify and protect them ? When the spices of the churches, and of the Christian garden flow out, then their Beloved comes into his garden and eats his pleasant fruit. Then shall we know, when we follow on to know the Lord : Then his going forth will be prepared as the morning : Then will he come unto us as the rain ; as the latter and former rain unto the earth. He will give us great refreshment and joy in his ordinances, secret, private and public. Shall I mention how in this way you will assure your hearts before God ? The light, peace and triumph it will give you in the hour of death ? Shall I plead with you the degeneracy of the times ? that error is coming in like a flood ? that iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxeth cold ?—The necessity which there is of good people's arising and standing in the gap, and making up the hedge ?—The special duty of all Christians acting in character, as the salt of the earth and the light of the world, to prevent total corruption and darkness ? Shall I plead with you the peculiar honor of faithfulness to God and our covenant engagements, in times of great and general corruption ? Shall I name unto you Enoch, Noah, Lot and Elijah, Daniel and the three children, as your exam-

ples ? who walked with God in times of great and general wickedness ; and whom he delivered and honored above all the men who have lived upon the earth. Shall I mention Phinehas who was zealous for the Lord, and to suppress the wickedness of his people, and that it was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for ever more ?* And that God hath not only set these examples before us, for our encouragement and imitation in the worst times ; but that he hath made exceedingly great and precious promises to all those who will walk with him in those dark and evil days ? That to those, who feared him and thought upon his name, at a time of uncommon infidelity and licentiousness, among his ancient people, he promised, That a book of remembrance should be written before him, for them ? That they should be unto him, as his peculiar treasure, and that he would spare them, in the day that he maketh up his jewels, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him ?† That he promised unto the few names in Sardis, who had not defiled their garments, that they should walk with him in white ; and that he declared them to be worthy ?

These are some of those weighty considerations, of those endearing and forcible examples, which God hath set before us, to engage our fidelity in his service. By these he commands us, pleads with and presseth us to keep covenant with him. And do not our hearts, in contemplation of them, burn within us ? Is not our zeal enkindled, and are

* Psalm cvi. 30, 31.

† Malachi iii. 16, 17.

not our resolutions invigorated? Shall we not, deeply impressed and impelled by their united energy, lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race which is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith? As we have received him, shall we not walk in him, rooted and established in the faith, as we have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving? Shall we not watch and pray always; praying with all prayer and supplication, in the spirit, with all perseverance and supplication for all saints? Shall we not wrestle with God, that the spirit of primitive Christianity may be poured out upon all our churches, and upon their pastors? That we and all our brethren may maintain a more close and humble walk with God? That this address might be succeeded to this happy effect on ourselves and others? Shall we not strive to grow more and more in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?—To excel in the religion of the closet, of the family and of the house of God; and in the constant, cheerful discharge of all relative duties? Shall we not exhort one another daily, and consider one another to provoke unto love and good works? Shall we not do these duties so much the more as time flies away, and as we see the day of death and judgment approaching? Shall we not from this time shake off all slothfulness and be fervent in spirit serving the Lord?

Dear brethren, if there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of

the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, let us, I beseech you, fulfil the joy of the apostles and of all good men, by being like minded, to perform these duties, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind, observing all things whatsoever Jesus hath commanded us. Amen.

Thoughts on Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6.

NO. I.

“FOR it is impossible for those, who have been once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame.”

MEN of different religious sentiments, do not agree in their interpretation of this passage of scripture; nor indeed do all those who harmonize, as to the general scheme of doctrines, contained in the word of God. Among those who maintain, that all true saints will persevere to final salvation, there are two different constructions. Some believe, that, by being *enlightened, tasting the heavenly gift, &c.* the apostle meant to express only such things, as may be experienced, by natural men; and that falling away, in which they are said to crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, must be taken to mean the unpardonable sin. It is believed by others, that the apostle is here speaking of the distinguish-

ing experiences of real saints ; and for some important purpose, which accords with this interpretation. I shall offer a few remarks on the former interpretation, and then attempt to maintain the latter.

It will probably be agreed, on all hands, according to the express tenor of the words, that falling away, in the sense here intended, is a sin, for which there is no repentance, nor forgiveness. But the point in question is, whether this be the sin unto death, spoken of by St. John, and which Christ tells us, shall never be forgiven. This sin he has defined, with great precision, so as to render it distinguishable from all other sins, in the gospel according to Matt. xii. 31, 32, " Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men ; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven : but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come."

The sin here described is doubtless that of which the Scribes and Pharisees were guilty, on this occasion, when ascribing the miracles which Christ wrought, and particularly his casting out devils, to the agency of Beelzebub, the prince of devils. This they probably did, not only through the strength of malice and opposition to Christ, but against a full conviction of their own consciences. This agrees with Heb. x. 26. *For if we sin, wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of*

the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. This sinning wilfully is explained, ver. 29, by *having done despite unto the Spirit of grace.* But if this be the thing intended, in the passage under consideration, it is difficult to account for its being expressed by the idea of *falling away* ; though this, in its consequences, must imply crucifying the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame. Falling away, even in this sort, does not comport with the example referred to by Christ, from which we are to learn the peculiar nature, and circumstances of the sin, which is unto death. It does not appear that those who blasphemed the Holy Ghost, by ascribing the casting out of devils, by Christ, to the agency of Beelzebub, were chargeable with falling away, and crucifying the Son of God afresh ; however they sinned wilfully, and did despite unto the Spirit of grace. They too had received the knowledge of the truth, from the personal ministry of Christ, in such sort, as to have been convinced, that he was the Messiah, and that he cast out devils, by the Spirit of God. It does not appear, however, that they had experienced any thing more than this. In their case, therefore, there was no falling away. They had nothing previously, from which they could have fallen. The idea, therefore, that, in order to committing the unpardonable sin, men must be partakers of the Holy Ghost, otherwise than to be understandingly convinced of his divine existence and operations, is not supported by any evidence from the word of God. Hence Paul, in the madness with which he op-

posed the work of the divine Spirit, and compelled the followers of Jesus to blaspheme, would evidently have committed the sin unto death, if, instead of *verily thinking* he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, he had done the same against the convictions of his own conscience; believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and his kingdom to be promoted, by the special agency of the Holy Ghost. He says, therefore, *But I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly, in unbelief.*—It is doubtless true, that men may apostatize from a visible profession of Christianity, and even an appearance of strong attachment to Jesus Christ; and eventually commit the unpardonable sin. This would be the case with real saints, *should* they apostatize, so as to renounce their Christian profession, tread under foot the Son of God, and do despite unto the spirit of grace. But as the passage before us intimates nothing of the latter, which is implied in the express utterance of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, it seems natural to conclude, that this cannot be fairly understood of the falling away here intended. This construction would involve the necessity of admitting a sentiment, which is wholly repugnant to the scriptures, viz. that there are more specific crimes than one, which are unpardonable sins.

A more particular examination of the words in question will now be attempted; and such arguments be adduced, as are thought conclusive, that the several terms made use of by the apostle, are intended to denote the distinguishing and evangel-

ical experiences of real saints.

Those, who were once enlightened. It is conceived, that being enlightened, in the sense here intended, is never true of men, who are not sanctified in heart. The term here used is the same, in the Greek (*Photisthentes*) which, in Heb. x. 32. is rendered *illuminated*. But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after that ye were illuminated, &c. I conclude it will not be doubted, but this must be understood of that spiritual and saving illumination, which is peculiar to such, as are sanctified. The apostle speaks, accordingly, of their knowing, on this ground, that they have in heaven, a better and more enduring substance.

When men are spoken of, as subjects of spiritual light, it seems always designed to denote what is exclusively true of believers. Hence said Paul to the Eph. v. 8. *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.* They are said, accordingly, to be *all children of the light and of the day.* They are farther said to *walk in the light;—to believe in the light; and to have the light of life.* Agreeing with all this, the grace imparted to the elect, in their renovation and sanctification, is thus represented 2 Cor. iv. 6. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Jesus Christ.

It is important to consider, that its being customary with us, to speak of men, *as enlightened*, and its being true that they are, in the sense we intend, is no rule for deciding what the Holy Spir-

it intends when speaking in the same language. The holy scriptures speak of the unsanctified, as *hating the light* ; as *walking in darkness* ; and as *having their understandings darkened, through the ignorance, which is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts*. Accordingly, coming to the knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus, is represented by being delivered from the power of darkness, and translated out of darkness into marvelous light.

I have been able to find no scripture examples, in which men are spoken of, as enlightened, to denote any thing short of a saving and holy illumination ; unless it be John i. 9. where Christ is said to be *the true light, which lighteth every man, that cometh into the world*. But this is naturally and doubtless very correctly explained, by the sayings of Christ, *I am the light of the world* ; and *I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me, should not abide in darkness*. But this implies, that men abide in darkness, and therefore, are not enlightened, till they believe in him. What is said then of his lighting every man, may not be taken to mean, that men are ever enlightened by Christ, in any sense, which is recognized by the scriptures of truth, till they receive him by a living faith, as the light of the world, and thence become children of the light.

And have tasted the heavenly gift. This must intend something, which is given to men from heaven. It must, therefore, mean Jesus Christ, whom God gave, to be the propitiation for the sins of the world. Christ

is said to have given himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity. As the heavenly gift cannot be understood to mean the Holy Spirit, who is particularly mentioned, in the clause immediately following, it must be understood, primarily, of Christ, including in a general and extensive view, all the blessings of the new covenant. This construction is admitted by some, if not all of those, who contend that the passage, taken together, must be explained in application to the graceless and unholy. That which is here meant, must be a spiritual tasting, for the good tasted is spiritual and holy. It is therefore, a branch of the similitude, by which believers to denote their participation of Christ, and the spiritual benefits of his mediatorial work, are said to eat his flesh, and drink his blood, and without this, to have no life in them. Spiritual tasting, eating and drinking, are doubtless exercises of the spiritual man.— From the obvious meaning of the terms, as used in the foregoing examples, they are evidently things, of which men are incapable, till they are made spiritually alive. Hence it is said, 1 Peter ii. 3, to denote the union of believers to Christ, and their participation in all his spiritual and saving benefits, *If so be ye have tasted, that the Lord is gracious : to whom coming, as unto a living stone. To you, therefore, who believe, he is precious*.— His being precious to believers implies, that they have a spiritual discerning of his infinite beauty, and an answerable relish for it. All this implies spiritual life, or holy love. If the heavenly gift be extended, which is

evidently warranted by the scriptures, so as to include all the grace which is imparted to believers through him, the foregoing construction will be further strengthened, and the sentiment confirmed, that tasting the heavenly gift must be taken to denote the spiritual and holy attainments of real saints. With this agrees the divine declaration, that the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. If eternal life be taken, in one view of it, to mean the heavenly gift, the same consequence will follow, as evidence, that the whole must be applied, exclusively, to believers. If men have once tasted the gift of eternal life, which can consist only with a vital union to the Saviour, they have doubtless been made alive unto God through him.

Some hold that the heavenly gift is used, to denote the satisfaction and joy, which men may experience, under given circumstances, while selfish and unholy; and that the character and experiences of such persons are illustrated, in the parable of the sower; by what is said of those, who hear the word, and anon with joy receive it, but in time of temptation fall away. Is it, however, agreeable to the scriptures, and to sound reason, that the divine Spirit should have represented those false, unholy and delusive joys, which the unrenewed may experience, by the similitude of *tasting the heavenly gift*, when this must evidently be construed to mean eternal life, as the object, and Jesus Christ, as the divine mediator, through which it is tasted? Such experience nothing, in those attainments and joys, which most

nearly resemble Christian experiences, except such comforts, as result from a false, and groundless hope, which must, one day, make ashamed.

And have been made partakers of the holy Ghost. Believers are said to be made partakers of Christ. But can this mean any thing short of receiving him, so as to be the subjects of a vital union to him, and thence made partakers of his holy nature, his divine righteousness, all the precious fruits of his atonement?—The answer must be, No. But what good reason can be assigned, why being made partakers of the holy Ghost should be restricted to mean so much less, than is evidently implied in partaking of Christ? Men are not properly said to be partakers of any thing, when nothing is imparted, of which they are the receivers and possessors. When they are said to *be made partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust*, we are doubtless to understand their participation of the divine holiness, or the moral image of God. The apostle speaks accordingly to the Hebrews, of being chastened by the Father of spirits, for their profit, that they might be partakers of his holiness.—For men, therefore, to be called *partakers of the holy Ghost*, merely on account of his ordinary, or more awakening and convincing operations, when nothing is imparted, of which they are the proper recipients and subjects, would not be *comparing spiritual things with spiritual*. So far from this, it would be speaking in the words, and annexing to the scriptures a meaning which man's wisdom deviseth. We

may not limit *being made partakers of the Holy Ghost*, to import any thing short of the effects wrought by his renewing influences, unless it appear from the sense in which the terms are used in the holy scriptures, that nothing more can be fairly understood. But let the point in question be tried by this rule, and it will be decided at once, that the clause here considered must denote a participation of the Holy Ghost, as the divine Sanctifier and Comforter, who is promised to believers, that he shall take up his abode with them forever.

Some have supposed, that *being made partakers of the Holy Ghost* might intend, being endued by his agency with the gift of prophecy, and of working miracles. Whether this may consist with an unregenerate heart or not, there seems to be nothing in the word of God, to warrant such a construction, in the present case. It is farther said, that men who are not sanctified in heart, are sometimes partakers of the Holy Ghost, in such degrees of his common operations, as to be greatly awakened and alarmed, in a view of their sin and misery. Let this be granted, which is doubtless true, it does not necessarily follow, that those, who fall away, from any thing implied in such experience, must unavoidably commit the unpardonable sin. Indeed, we have all the evidence, which the nature of the subject admits, that such persons are, sometimes, brought to saving repentance, after resisting the Holy Spirit, stifling their convictions, and remaining awhile plunged in security and guilt.

And have tasted the good word

of God, and the powers of the world to come. After what has been said of tasting the heavenly gift, it is thought unnecessary to enlarge on this part of the subject. Though *powers of the world to come* is a phrase which has no exact parallel, in the word of God, it is apprehended, that the terms must be understood, generally, to denote those invisible realities which are objects of the Christian faith, and which operate with strong, and often with the most delightful effect, on the minds of believers. Tasting the powers of the world to come may, therefore, with great propriety, be understood, as expressing that foretaste, which the saints now have of their future inheritance in heaven. The apostle to the Eph. i. 13, 14, says, *After that ye believed, ye were sealed by that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.* To the Cor. i epistle, v. 5. *Now he who hath wrought us to the self same thing is God; who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.* By means of this earnest, in which they had a foretaste of the heavenly inheritance, *they knew*, as ver. 1. that, *If their earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, they had a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

Tasting the good word of God must imply something more than is consistent with hating the truth, and loving darkness rather than light. Yea, it must imply a spiritual discerning of the moral beauty of divine truth, and of divine objects, exhibited by the light of it. The things tasted, if there be any propriety in the terms used, must be the good-

ness and divine beauty, which are seen and relished, in the word of God. Agreeing with this, said the Psalmist, *I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil*. This language is, at times, adopted by all true believers, while contemplating the ineffable glories of the gospel. After all, can it be consistent with sound reason, and the things which the Holy Ghost teacheth, to admit, that tasting the good word of God, can mean nothing more than those unholy joys, which stony ground hearers experience in a mistaken view and application of the truth, and while cherishing an hope, which must perish?

One argument still remains, in support of the foregoing interpretation, which, it is hoped, will be considered with candor, and allowed its full weight. This is derived from the phrase, *to renew them again* (palin) *unto repentance*. This clearly, and by fair construction, implies, that they *had been* true penitents.—Theirs was a repentance, to which they had been *once renewed*. There would otherwise, be no propriety in the mention of renewing them *again*. Being renewed, in a moral and scriptural application to men, always intends their spiritual renovation,—that renewing of the inward man, which always lays a foundation for the exercise of holy love, and for that evangelical and holy repentance, which is unto salvation. Hence the apostle speaks to the Col. iii. 9, 10, *of putting on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created him*. Tit. iii. 5, 6. According to his mercy he saved us, by the *washing of regeneration, and re-*

newing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ. It hence appears, that what is said of their being renewed, must respect their having been made partakers of the Holy Ghost. But if they had not been *once* renewed in this sort unto repentance, there could be neither sense nor propriety, in mentioning the impossibility of renewing them *again*, to that end. Nor does it obviate the force of this argument at all, to say, that their antecedent repentance might have been selfish and unholy. This is absurd, not only on the ground, that they might have had this repentance, without being *once* renewed, but this they might have *again*, though they should remain unrenewed; yea doubtless would, with eyes lifted up in torments. Indeed, this is a species of repentance, *which needeth to be repented of*, and is, in its nature, opposed to that which is unto life. If, therefore, the repentance, to which it is impossible to renew men *again*, be that which is evangelical and saving, doubtless that is of the same nature to which they *had been once* renewed, antecedent to their falling away. To speak of renewing them *again* unto repentance, intending that which is unto life, would be very absurd, if that, of which they had once been subjects, were merely selfish, proceeding from that sorrow of the world, which worketh death.

It is apprehended that this argument derives some additional weight, from a natural interpretation of what immediately follows, as a reason why it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; *seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God*

afresh, and put him to an open shame. This crucifying *afresh* implies, that they had crucified him before they were brought to repentance. It farther implies, that when they were once renewed, and were thence enlightened, in the manner explained, they crucified him no longer. But this they had never ceased to do, unless their repentance were genuine. All impenitents, whatever selfish sorrow they may have for sin, or selfish joy in the hope of salvation, are still guilty of crucifying the Lord of glory. All men, especially men under the gospel, who live in impenitence, are guilty of this, by reason of their opposition to Jesus and his kingdom. This sentiment is confirmed by his saying, *He who is not with me, is against me; and he who gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.* If crucifying Christ may be construed to mean any thing, aside from the actual shedding of his blood, which will not be doubted, the guilt of it must be involved in being against him, and scattering abroad, according to his meaning, in the use of these terms. Their practical language is, Away with him, let him be crucified:—we will not have this man to reign over us. Being guilty of this, *afresh*, clearly denotes that it is done a second time; and is thence analogous to what has been said of being renewed *again* unto repentance. It is some additional evidence, therefore, that the construction given to the whole passage is according to truth.

[To be continued.]

GENTLEMEN,

I SEND you the excellent and pious thoughts of the late John

Thornton, Esq. of Clapham, near London, which he inclosed in a letter to the late Rev. Dr. Wheelock, in 1772.

Your friend and brother,

DAVID M'CLURE.

E. Windsor, Jan. 17, 1805.

[THE Editors think that their readers may be pleased with the view of Christian Experience, given in this letter; especially as the writer was in civil life and high station; eminent for abilities and piety.]

Christian Experience, exemplified in the following Characters.

A. B. and C. in a course of sin, dissipation and worldly distraction, have been apprehended by the preventing grace of the Almighty; their faces have been turned toward Zion by the power of assisting grace, without any thing good in them, already or foreseen, to deserve such a distinguishing favor, but purely and solely by the sovereign mercy of their great Creator and gracious Redeemer. They are all three now supposed travelling towards the heavenly world; all well apprized of the danger of sin, all convinced of the necessity of a change of heart and principles, all want an interest in the blood and righteousness of Jesus the Redeemer, all are the subjects of divine teaching, and probably will all at last get safe to glory.—A. labors under the terrors of conscience, awakened by the law; sees and feels the guilt of sin; is sensible that sin unpardoned will sink the soul into the bottomless pit; is afraid of the power, holiness and justice of God; can get no comfort from a reflection upon the goodness,

love and mercy of God ; the law threatens its curse, guilt is troublesome, the heart is broken.—A. has recourse to prayer, pleads Christ, mentions his merits with very little knowledge of the value of them, a cloud is upon the understanding, doubts and fears possess the soul.—A. grows more earnest in prayer as he sees his danger to increase ; feels at intervals some inward comfort, the drawings of the Divine Spirit ; while these continue A. is happy, and thinks these to be comfortable tokens of divine favor, and knows not but these are the manifestations of Christ to his soul. These intervals are the zenith of A's happiness in his present state. These happy visits prove transitory ; when they are gone, guilt and fears return, and A. suspects all to have been delusion—wants them again,—looks upon them as necessary to salvation, and the highest evidence of divine favor that can be attained in this state of things.

A. has inward impulses and suggestions ; but views the perfect righteousness of Christ as the only sure rest. These manifestations may be from the Holy Spirit, not given for A. to rest in, but refresh him by the way ; to revive his dying hopes, that he may be encouraged to seek further aids and influences of grace, and at last be brought to center all his hopes of salvation upon that sure foundation laid in Zion, the Lord Jesus Christ.—If A's work of grace is not a common, but an extraordinary one, this anchoring upon Christ will be the happy result in God's due time.

B. has been under the same conviction of sin with A.—B. has been brought to true repentance,

has been acquainted with the drawings and comforts of the Spirit : These have been withdrawn, and B. has had his doubts and fears again and again ; and so far B. joins with A. In the following particulars B. goes beyond or farther than A.—B. has been made sensible that inward comforts, without a foundation, are not to be depended upon : He has made further enquiry by prayer and reading the word, has seen in scripture that Jesus Christ and him crucified, is the only foundation and hope of a sinner—has seen that justification, redemption and salvation are in and through Christ. These points he can speak of with tolerable clearness, having the infallible word for his guide. These are valuable discoveries ; yet notwithstanding them all, B. wants something more ; for doubts and fears arise, whether or not these blessings belong to him, though they are held out in scripture for sinners, as such. B. knowing the way of salvation from the word, begins to be more earnest for an assurance of it in his own heart. To this end are all his petitions now directed—for he is firmly persuaded there is more implied in the very letter of scripture, especially when the riches of Christ and the privileges of his children are mentioned, than he has ever yet been acquainted with. Now he is in quest of blessings which he has had no experience of, consequently is much in the dark respecting their value, and how they are to be attained. B. waits at the throne of grace, an humble suppliant, and counts upon every fresh discovery of divine love ; is thankful for all, but still continues sensible of a vacuum

or void in the soul, which he wants to be filled up. In process of time, B. has a discovery or revelation of Christ, in a surprising fulness to his soul. What he before saw in theory, he is now certain of ; for the blessings of Christ carry their own evidence along with them ; and he can, and does rejoice in the salvation of Jesus. He sees the bible with new eyes ; he sees the promises and feels them ; sees Christ the wisdom and power of God, and boasts in him as such. His affections are fixed, and all the powers of the mind are filled with admiration, wonder and astonishment. In short, B. sees enemies conquered, a door of mercy opened, and himself entered in at that door. He has got deliverance and rejoices in it : the bent of his soul is now to glorify God. B. from a servant is become a son, and desires to walk worthy of his high calling ; he has fellowship and communion with God, is a burning and shining light ; his words are with power, and all that know him call him the blessed of the Lord. B's views of things are now as different from what they were awhile ago, as one face can be from another ; and he stands amazed at his former ignorance and stupidity. B. is now upon the mount, and all things go well with him ; and what is more, he really thinks every enemy is destroyed.—Unhappy for B. by very nice and subtle degrees he loses his first love, dwindles into luke-warmness, performs not duties with that vigor he was wont—the more immediate evidences of God's favor are withheld ; his soul grows lean from day to day, and inward fellowship with

Christ is frequently interrupted. He is now liable to a charge of spiritual barrenness, deserves reproof for neglecting his vineyard, nor does he improve the talents committed to his own soul's happiness or the honor of his heavenly Father.

C. can join with A. respecting conviction of sin ; has been under terrors, from an apprehension of divine justice and holiness, knows all A's experience. C. can also join with B. in all his attainments—has had as clear a revelation of Christ to his own soul as B. ; has known the time of love, and felt the power of it ; has as great regard for, and dependence upon the faithfulness of God in his word as B. ; has been zealous of good works as B. ; has also been equally sensible of luke-warmness and indifference in spiritual things, even after the motives to obedience have been fully known ; there is nothing that B. can say, but C. can join with him ; can talk, argue and reason about spiritual matters, with equal perspicuity and clearness ; is not a whit behind him in any matter. But here lies the difference between B. and C.—B. in his declining state, has little more than a name to live. C. will not rest without feeling the power of spiritual life. B. depends upon Christ's work. C. does the same, but will have a faith, also, purifying the heart, working by love, overcoming the world, and drawing out of Christ's fulness, grace for grace. B. uses ordinances ; C. will have fellowship with God in ordinances. B. is a branch in the true vine ; C. must be a fruitful branch in the same vine. B. rests satisfied in the belief of the promises ; C. will be after obtaining the prom-

ises. B. values his privileges ; C. enjoys them. B. is not always earnestly seeking the light of the divine countenance ; C. is ever importunate for it ; would not have one day pass without a glimpse of it. B. can mix with worldly company and suffer no great loss ; C. is sensible of its loss, and mourns it. B. has a perfect robe of righteousness in Christ ; C. has the same ; but is earnest after inherent holiness. B. views Christ as a Saviour and Deliverer from the guilt of sin ; but is not sufficiently earnest to be delivered from the power of it. C. does the same, and yet further is earnest to break its power, by copying after the *example* of Christ ; wants to be transformed into the same image in meekness, humility, love, self-denial, patience, and deadness to the world. B. has a principle of grace ; C. has that principle drawn out into more lively exercise. B's faith seldom sails into the sea of love ; C's makes frequent excursions there, and like the ships of Tarshish, returns loaded with heavenly treasure. In short, B. is upon a right foundation ; but builds little more than wood, hay, stubble ; while C. builds gold, silver, precious stones, that will endure a fiery trial.

Explanation of Matthew xi. 12.

An attempt to explain and illustrate the principal ideas held forth in the words of Christ recorded in Matthew xi. 12. "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

WHAT is the kingdom of heaven ? How did it suffer violence from the days of John the Baptist ?—Who are the violent ? And, how did they take the kingdom of heaven by force ? A correct and intelligible answer to these questions may exhibit the principal ideas contained in the words.

What is the kingdom of heaven ? The kingdom of heaven is the divine government or kingdom set up by Christ, comprising the kingdom of grace in this world, and of glory in the world to come. Christ is the king, and his disciples or church the subjects. And the gospel, as preached by Christ and his special ministers, contains and exhibits the constitution of this kingdom, and the great charter of its rights and privileges—the engagements on the part of the king to his subjects, as to the care he will take of them, the protection and security he will afford them, the nature and manner of his government over them, and the nature, extent and duration of the privileges and blessings which they shall enjoy. And in regard to the subjects, the gospel contains and exhibits the terms of admission into this kingdom, the duties required of them, the character they must maintain, and the manner in which they must conduct, in order to enjoy the privileges and blessings of true and faithful subjects.

The subjects of this divine kingdom constitute a society distinct from the world—widely different from every other society, kingdom or nation, in several respects ; and particularly in the following. They all partake, more or less, of the spirit of

Christ their king. Hence, they all have one spirit, and are of a peculiar character, very different from the rest of mankind: they are all holy—"a holy nation." They are united in the same faith—in the same fundamental principles and doctrines, the doctrines of Christ, which are widely different from those of every other society, nation, or kingdom. They are governed by and yield obedience to a peculiar system of laws, differing, in many respects, from the laws of all other kingdoms. The laws of Christ exhibited in the gospel are their rule of life.—Hence, They are distinguished from all other societies and kingdoms, by the grand object and end of their union. This is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. It is to attain and possess salvation from sin, and complete victory over all the enemies of God and themselves—perfect holiness—perfect conformity to God, and complete happiness in the enjoyment of him. Of course, by their great and peculiar privileges, they are exceedingly distinguished from and placed high above the rest of mankind. They are in a state of peace and favor with God, under the special care, protection and government of Christ their head and their king. And when all other kingdoms come to a perpetual end, this will be brought to its most complete and perfect state, to endure for ever.

Is not this a kingdom worth taking pains for? Are not the privileges and blessings to be enjoyed in it such as may well engage mankind to labor and strive, with all their might, to obtain possession of it? Hence,

we may pertinently proceed to the second question, viz.

How did the kingdom of heaven suffer violence from the days of John the Baptist?

The original greek word, here rendered by the phrase, "suffereth violence," admits of an active or passive signification—to press upon, or to be pressed upon. In Luke xiv. 16, where the same fact is stated by Christ, the same word is translated *presseth*.—"The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." Here the word rendered *presseth*, is precisely the same in the original, that in Matthew is rendered *suffereth violence*.

"All the prophets and the law prophesied until John." By the predictions of the prophets, and by the sacrifices and various typical rites and ordinances of the law, the kingdom of heaven, the gracious and happy government of the Messiah, and the privileges and blessings peculiar to his administration, were represented as future and at some distance. But when John came and entered upon his public ministry, he declared the period just arrived, for the speedy commencement or exhibition of this heavenly kingdom. "Repent ye" said he; "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He signified that he came as the immediate forerunner of the Messiah, to prepare his way; and that the Messiah himself would follow quickly after him: yea, that he was already come, and would soon be openly manifested, and produce great and wonderful effects. To the multitudes, who came to his baptism, John

preached in a very awakening and alarming manner, adapted to convince them of their sin and danger, of the necessity of repentance, and of evidencing it by its proper fruits and effects in their practice, that they might share in the distinguishing blessings of the kingdom of heaven then at hand, and escape the terrible destruction represented by cutting down and casting into the fire every tree, which did not bring forth good fruit.

Then commenced, and from thence to the time when Christ spake the words of the text, as well as afterwards, continued, the ardor after the kingdom of heaven to get into it, and to obtain and enjoy its peculiar privileges and blessings, signified by its *suffering violence*. Numbers were as much engaged, and pressed forward with as great resolution, to lay hold and get possession of this kingdom, that they might partake of its blessings, as if they were assaulting a town or castle, and determined to push forward at all events, at every hazard, till they were in possession of it. —Something like this, I conceive, is signified by the word which is rendered “suffereth violence.” —This brings us to the third question.

Who are the violent?

The violent are those, whether native Jews, or others, who, under a conviction of their sin and misery, and of the truth of what John and others testified concerning the kingdom of heaven, were heartily desirous of sharing its blessings in the divinely prescribed and appointed way, and ready to sacrifice every principle, inclination and interest which stood in the way.

By the short historical sketch-

es written by the four evangelists, it is sufficiently evident, that numbers of those, who were considerably awakened and alarmed by the preaching of John, of Christ, and of others, and excited for a time to attend to their instructions, as though they meant and expected to be subjects of the kingdom of heaven and partake of its blessings, nevertheless stopt short of a cordial reception of Christ or the gospel, and did not become real subjects of his kingdom, and failed of sharing its peculiar blessings. These, notwithstanding their engagedness and high expectations, did not attain to or possess the character of the violent, who took or laid hold of the kingdom of heaven, but were destitute of their temper and spirit.

King Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him, and when he heard, he did many things, and heard him gladly. He had such a conviction that John was a holy man of God, that he performed many things which John inculcated, and sometimes willingly and gladly heard him preach, from a selfish desire and hope of deriving some benefit from his instruction. But when John reproved him for all the evils which he had done, and particularly, for marrying and living with his brother Philip's wife, and insisted that it was not lawful for him to have her; he would not sacrifice his carnal inclinations and interests, and abandon every evil way and practice, for the kingdom of heaven's sake. Herein he showed himself totally destitute of the temper and spirit of the violent. To have supported the character of

the violent who take the kingdom of heaven, he must, for its sake, have resolutely opposed and subdued those evil inclinations and lusts, and ceased from all those evil practices, and overcome those solicitations and resentments of his unlawful wife, which stood in the way of a cordial reception of the gospel, and a hearty obedience to its precepts.

The young man who came to Christ with the important question, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" appeared very desirous of endless happiness, and to have a good opinion of Christ as a divine teacher, and probably thought he should readily do every thing in his power, to secure the inestimable blessing of everlasting felicity. But when Christ said to him, "Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven : and come, take up the cross, and follow me : he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved : for he had great possessions." He appeared not to have resolution sufficient to forsake *all* for Christ's sake and the gospel's—to take up the cross and follow Christ, for the sake of the treasure in heaven promised him on that condition. He could not do such violence to his attachment to his great possessions, to his worldly interest and inclinations, as to sacrifice and give up all for the kingdom of heaven ; and thus fell short of the character of the violent.

But they, who were so sensible of their present guilty and miserable state, and so convinced of the safety and happiness to be had only in the kingdom of Christ, and who also had such a

sense and relish of the superior worth and excellence of the blessings of this kingdom, that they were resolutely and perseveringly determined to receive the doctrines and obey the commands of Christ, at the expense of every principle, inclination and interest incompatible therewith, and of all the mortification, self-denial, labors and sufferings, necessary thereto or implied therein—they were the violent, who took the kingdom of heaven by force.—This brings us to the fourth and last question, viz.

How did they take the kingdom of heaven by force ? What can be the meaning of this expression ?

Perhaps the proper import of the original is not so happily and justly expressed by the phrase, "take it by force." I would rather render it by the words "seize upon it"—or "lay hold on and secure it."

Suppose a beautiful city, in which men, were they in possession of it, would find ample security, good accommodations, and supplies of every necessary for their support and real happiness, is proposed as an object to be taken possession of and enjoyed. But the way of access to it is very difficult and laborious. It is so situated and so many obstacles lie in the way of getting to it, and taking and keeping possession of it, that in order to succeed in the attempt, men must push forward with great resolution, and disencumber themselves of whatever would obstruct their progress, and perhaps submit to the loss of every thing they have elsewhere. Some however, feeling the wretchedness of their present condition, and possessed of a high sense of

the inestimable worth of this city, press forward through every obstacle, leaving behind them, or dropping and throwing away in their course, whatever they find cannot be carried with them, and go resolutely forward to the very walls and gates of the city, and seize and take possession of it, and secure to themselves a settlement in it.—This supposed case may serve, in some measure, to illustrate, by way of similitude, the conduct, which, it is conceived, Christ meant to represent by saying, “the violent take it by force;” or seize upon, lay hold of and secure it.

Whilst the Pharisees and many of the Jews vainly imagined themselves the favorites of God, and through pride, covetousness and worldly lusts, despised and rejected the calls to repent and believe in and obey the Messiah, numbers, among whom were publicans and harlots and Roman soldiers, and such as the Pharisees held in great contempt, were thoroughly convinced of their sinful, dangerous and miserable state, and also, that forgiveness and salvation were to be enjoyed only in the way of repentance and faith in and obedience to Christ, and becoming real subjects of the kingdom of heaven. Of the inestimable worth of the blessings of this kingdom they likewise had a strong persuasion and some relish. Therefore, like the men in the supposed case just stated, they resolutely pressed into this kingdom, laid hold of, seized upon and secured the possession of it, by embracing the doctrine, and obeying the precepts, and following the instructions of John, of Christ, and of his special ministers, at the expense and to the rejection

of all their former principles and opinions which were repugnant thereto—of their own righteousness and fond hopes of obtaining favor with God by any thing which they did or could do—at the expense of those worldly interests and pursuits, which were inconsistent with the doctrines and laws of the kingdom of heaven, submitting to the mortifications, self-denials and sufferings, and laborious services required or called to—engaging and persevering in the exercise and practice of righteousness and true holiness, in doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God. They thus engaged and persevered in obedience to the doctrines and laws of Christ, watching, praying, wrestling and striving against sin and Satan, the flesh and the world, and whatever stood in their way, not in their own wisdom and strength; but in an entire dependence on the wisdom and strength, grace and merit of their king and head, according to his gracious promises to those, who cordially take him for their Lord and Saviour, and proved victorious by the gift of God through their Lord Jesus Christ.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

1. In the gospel, the kingdom of heaven is still preached—is yet exhibited and placed before us, with all its peculiar privileges and blessings, as an object for our choice and pursuit, to be received, laid hold of and secured, by all who are willing to be subjects in it and enjoy its blessings in the divinely appointed way—on the prescribed terms and conditions.

2. The blessings of this kingdom are well worth all the labor, pains and expense, sacrifice

ces and sufferings, necessary to obtain possession of it, and secure a settlement in it.

3. The time, in which we shall have any possible chance or opportunity to lay hold and obtain possession of the kingdom of heaven and secure its blessings, is short, very short, and extremely uncertain. It is limited to the present life. It is *now*, or *never*.

4. In this kingdom is comprised all the real, permanent good ever to be enjoyed by mankind. Out of this kingdom there is no salvation—no real, permanent good for any human creature. But every one who does not become a subject in it, will not only fail entirely of all true happiness, but experience the extreme of misery forever, after the close of this short and uncertain life!

PAREPIDEMOS.

Biographical Sketches of the Rev. Job Swift, D. D. who died at Enosburgh, in Vermont, October 20, 1804.

DEATH is a subject always affording religious instruction. The death of a private person, though it furnish to all matter for useful contemplation, is apt to interest but the small number of those personally acquainted with the deceased. The death of one sustaining a public character, especially of a public benefactor to mankind, excites a more general interest and concern. Perhaps in few instances has the death of a minister of the gospel occasioned a more deep and universal sympathy than that of the Rev. Job Swift, D. D. The universal grief, manifested by all class-

es in community, must be considered as furnishing a sincere tribute to his worth, and an ample testimony of his extensive usefulness. All acknowledge the importance of keeping alive the memory of such men, that, though dead, they may yet speak. A perusal of the writings bequeathed by them to the world, may often have this effect. Unfortunately in the present case, no such benefit can be experienced. Such was the extreme modesty of Dr. S. that though often importuned by his brethren in the ministry, he never would consent that any of his productions should be published.

The following imperfect sketch of his life and character may not be unacceptable to those, who cherish in their hearts, the memory of those great and good men, who have done honor to the cause of Christianity.

He was born in Sandwich, in the state of Massachusetts, on the 17th of June, A. D. 1743, O. S. He was graduated at Yale College in 1765. He was by nature endowed with those distinguished talents, which would have enabled him to appear with the highest reputation in any profession. It was from motives of duty that he chose the ministerial profession, and he was assisted in his preparatory studies by the Rev. Dr. Bellamy, of whom he ever afterwards retained a profound esteem. He was little more than twenty-two years of age, when he became a preacher of the gospel. In the following year, he was ordained over a church and people in Richmond, Mass. where he labored seven years. His prospects of usefulness in this place were, for a time, favorable and encouraged him to

hope that his labors would be successful. That he might more readily lead the minds of his people into a proper understanding of the Christian doctrines, he lent his aid in favor of religious conferences, in which, questions on doctrinal subjects were freely discussed. By his unwearied exertions a great part of his people, in a short time, became well indoctrinated, and some few of them the hopeful subjects of gospel grace. But alas! The scene was soon changed. His bright prospects began to darken, and he had soon to encounter those afflictive difficulties which so often fall to the lot of the faithful ministers of Christ. His difficulties here arose solely from his strict and conscientious adherence to what he judged divine truth. Neither the purity of his sentiments nor his Christian charity would suffer him to favor the sentiments and wishes of many of his church. While he was faithful in teaching them that the just live by faith, and warning them of the danger of being slothful in the performance of Christian duties, many were highly offended with him, because he did not preach consolation. Having set himself as a defence of the gospel of Christ, he could not be persuaded to accommodate himself to their feelings. This served but to increase their dissatisfaction, and they at length declared themselves irreconcilable. He was of course soon dismissed from his pastoral charge. Many and grievous were the trials and afflictions which he experienced: But he endured them all with the patience, submission and cheerfulness which formed such distinguished traits in his character through his whole life. After his dismissal from the church in Richmond, he preached in different places about a year, during which time, nothing very remarkable happened with relation to him. He then removed to a place called the Nine Partners, in the state of New-York. During his stay in this place, he had the misfortune of losing the chief part of his property by the depreciation of paper currency. This loss, though severe, he endured with all his usual fortitude and cheerfulness. Here his gospel labors were attended with no apparent success; and he met with no opposition; for the greatest stupidity and carelessness reigned among his people, notwithstanding all his endeavors to awaken them. At the end of about seven years, finding his labors ineffectual, he thought it his duty to remove to some other place. He then went to Manchester in Vermont, where he labored successfully about two years. The Lord attended the word which he preached with his spirit; and a considerable number were gathered into the church of Christ, under his administration. He then had an invitation to settle in Bennington, where he spent about sixteen years. During this term, he was called, nearly at the same time, to part with two of his children. This afflictive stroke of Providence he endured with the patience and submission which always peculiarly characterized him. It may not be expedient to go into an enquiry relative to the causes which led to his dismissal from the church and people of Bennington. The event is recent and the subject a delicate one. The people of

Bennington, it is hoped, while they realize their obligations to a once beloved and faithful pastor, will cherish with pleasure his memory, and be fully sensible of the honor conferred on them, in having enjoyed the labors of one so highly distinguished. After leaving Bennington, from motives truly pious and laudable, he removed to Addison. The people of Addison will always remember, with the warmest emotions, their obligations to him for the good which he was instrumental of accomplishing among them. The town had long been in a divided state, the situation unhappily of too many of the towns in Vermont. But after the town was blessed with his residence, as if an angel had taken up his abode with them, the moral and religious character of the people was soon entirely changed. A church was organized and rendered respectable by the number of its members. Public worship on the sabbath was statedly observed, and every thing began to wear a new and promising appearance. It is not easy to conceive the grief, which the people felt on learning the sorrowful news of his death. This truly mournful event happened, while he was in the northern part of Vermont on a mission, which, with the consent of his people, he voluntarily undertook at his own expense. The same zeal and disinterested concern for the highest good of his fellow creatures, which he displayed through life, he exhibited till death. On the 20th of October, 1804, after he had passed his sixtieth year, while he was at Enosburgh, his kind Lord relieved him from his Christian

warfare, and without doubt, received him to a more noble and exalted state, in that better world, where warfare is never known. The patience with which he endured the pains of his last sickness, and the composure and peace of mind, which he maintained in the prospect of approaching death, excited the greatest astonishment in an unbeliever who happened to be present. When asked if he was willing to die,—Dr. S. replied, "Death has no terrors." Most persons think it a happiness to die in the midst of their friends; but he, more tender of them than of himself, wished that none of them might be present to witness so painful a spectacle. Some of his last words were—"I have often thought it would be very distressing to have my family around me in the hour of death." Thus died the Rev. Dr. S. cut off by a sudden death, in the entire possession of his mental faculties, and at the very height of his usefulness. On the death of such an eminent servant of God may we not exclaim, Surely a great man has fallen in Israel!

His funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. Benjamin Wooster, from Isai. lvii. 1. The righteous are taken away from the evil to come. His funeral rites were performed in the presence of the same persons who had heard his last sermon and witnessed the earnest zeal for their salvation, which he manifested at the conference which he was attending when taken unwell. Surely they must be greatly blame-worthy, if they have failed to profit by the affecting and instructive lesson which they then received, or if they

suffer the impressions made on their minds ever to be effaced. A funeral sermon was afterwards preached at Addison, by the Rev. Jedediah Bushnell, from Heb. xi. 4. By it *Being dead he yet speaketh*. The Rev. Lemuel Haynes also preached a funeral sermon on the occasion, to his people in West-Rutland.

A few remarks will here be added, as a farther illustration of the character of the Rev. Dr. S.

A person, who had the best opportunity of knowing and observing him accurately, declares "that patience, contentment and cheerfulness in every circumstance of his life, distinguished his character: That he never knew him express a murmuring or complaining word, or manifest any real uneasiness in any situation, however disagreeable, or under any trial, however afflictive: That if he ever discovered any thing of the kind in any of his family, he always admonished them; reminding them how many mercies they enjoyed, and how ill they deserved them: That he always bore the contradiction of the wicked with the most admirable patience: That he never knew him, in a single instance, revile again when he was reviled: That he always bore the bitter reproaches and slanders of his enemies without the least apparent uneasiness; and that when called to endure their personal abuse, he always submitted himself to it, without ever shewing the least degree of resentment: That he was never heard to utter a word slanderously, or reproachfully, against any of his fellow-men; not in any instance, even against his enemies: but always bore testimony against the wicked-

ness of the wicked in a charitable and gospel manner. As was his doctrine, so was his life."

The character of Dr. S. shines with distinguished lustre in whatever situation or relation he be viewed, whether as a man, as a citizen, as a Christian, pastor, scholar, neighbor, friend, husband or parent. He early discovered an inquisitive turn of mind and a fondness for investigating science and truth. The Author of nature had given him a capacious and comprehensive mind, and rendered him capable of exploring the depths of knowledge and of investigating the most abstruse subjects. Divinity was his favorite study. In this science, he made great acquisitions. His views were profound and clear; his sermons rich in sentiment and well digested. Such was the strength of his mind, that he never committed his sermons to memory, nor for many years, made use of notes in delivering them. He studied them while walking in his room, or in the field, and delivered them extemporaneously. The numbers who have been often entertained and edified by his faithful labors and instructive discourses, can witness that he was an able preacher, a scribe well instructed unto the kingdom of God. In prayer he was solemn, devotional and fervent. He was always able to adapt himself to particular occasions with peculiar pertinency. His words were weighty and accompanied with an air of sincerity. His manner was tender, affectionate and winning. With truth may it be said of him, that in meekness he instructed those who opposed. His religious sentiments he endeavored to found on the word of God, rather

than on human creeds. He resorted to the word of God as to a pure source, that he might receive from thence unadulterated knowledge. He always inculcated strongly on his hearers, the doctrine of human depravity, the necessity of regeneration, faith, repentance and good works, and adapted his discourses to common comprehension, never overlooking even the lowest capacity. He was apt to converse with persons of every description, that he might win their good will and benefit them. He ever manifested that zeal for the great truths and duties of Christianity which is according to knowledge; but, at the same time, abhorred bigotry. He ever exhibited an amiable liberality of disposition in his judgment of others, was disposed to speak of them with candor, and entertain a charitable hope for all of whatever denomination, who appeared to possess the essentials of religion. The different congregations with whom he has successively labored, can witness his prudence in the discharge of ministerial duties, his sincere love of peace and his unwearied efforts to preserve it. They can witness that he was not slothful, but abundant in labors, coveting not theirs but them. The words of Cowper apply, with such exact propriety, to the person who is the subject of these remarks, that one is almost tempted to suppose, that the poet must have had a personal reference to him.

"A preacher, such as Paul,
Were he on earth, would hear, approve and own.

—Simple, grave, sincere;
In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain;

And plain in manner. Decent, solemn, chaste,

And natural in gesture. Much impress'd

Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,

And anxious that the flock he fed
Should feel it too. Affectionate in look,
And tender in address, as well becomes

A messenger of grace to guilty men."

Providence, in casting his lot in Vermont, appears to have placed him where he could do most good, and where he was most wanted. On him literally devolved the care of all the churches. They looked up to him as to a father, for counsel and advice. His influence was never confined to the place where he lived; but was felt and most readily acknowledged in other towns and societies, where religion had any friends. There are few men in his profession, who attain to such distinguished eminence, and fewer still, to whom all concur in paying such distinguished respect. His weight among the clergy was not less than among the people. Seldom was there an ordination where he was not consulted, or an ecclesiastical council where he was not invited. At councils and meetings of the clergy, he ever presided with peculiar dignity. His age, talents and influence placed him at the head of the clergy, and by them, he was universally beloved and revered. He felt for the destitute situation of the newly settled towns, and more than once, at an advanced age, encountered the difficulties attending a mission. Though at times he viewed prospects as very dark with respect to the religious state of Vermont, and was ready to be almost entirely discouraged;—yet he would never give up his hopes entirely; Providence re-

warded his perseverance and prayers by giving him more comfortable views, during the latter part of his life, and it was with heart-felt pleasure that he beheld, before his death, a revival of religion in many of the towns.

Whether we view him, as a minister, or as a man, as laboring to promote the spiritual or the temporal happiness of others, he was truly benevolent, pious and sincere; wishing well to all, and contriving to promote their welfare. In conversation he was instructive and cheerful; and of easy access to all, both young and old. He ever was forward to countenance merit. Ingenious and pious young men he stimulated to obtain a liberal education and willingly assisted them in preparing for it.

He was remarkable for his kindness and hospitality; ever proved himself a faithful friend; was frank in his disposition; but at the same time prudently cautious. In private life, he was the affectionate husband and the kind parent; and was distinguished for constancy, diligence and activity. He was an accurate observer of men and things; and though he never would depart from his proper station, yet he was not inattentive to political occurrences.

As a scholar, he was well versed in classic literature; and the honor of a Doctorate in Divinity, conferred on him, by the corporation of William's College, was but a deserved tribute to his worth. He was a friend and patron of literature and of literary institutions, and was successively member of the corporations of Dartmouth, Williams and Middlebury Colleges. In re-

lation to all matters of business, in which he was engaged, he possessed what may be termed an *efficient character*. His sound judgment enabled him to discern real difficulties and to provide against them. His zeal to do good was undiminished to the last. His death, like his life, was calm without any surprise or agitation of spirit. He died with a blessed hope of a glorious immortality.

Let his life and example stimulate others to a happy imitation, and his death impress upon the hearts of all, the things which they have heard from his lips, that now he is dead they may have them always in remembrance.

The Rev. Mr. Kicherer's Narrative of his Mission to the Hottentots.

(Concluded from p. 438.)

I SHALL now beg leave to give an extract from my Diary, which was published in Holland, in the ninth Number of their Periodical Accounts, and which I happened to bring with me when I came from thence to London.

On the 3d of October, 1802, I baptized four Hottentot men and two women. On the preceding day they had given a satisfactory Confession of our Calvinistic Creed, showing that they were well grounded in the pure word of God, and that they had found solid consolation in the truth, in confidence of which they could venture into the eternal world; declaring also that

they were desirous, by their walk and conversation, to show forth the power of Jesus Christ, in whom they believed; determined, henceforth, not to live unto sin, but unto him.

The solemn service was begun by reading the 52d, 53d, 54th, and 55th chapters of Isaiah. We then sang the 3d part of Psalm cxviii. The Sermon, which was on Rom. vi. 1—4, concluded with a short address. After which Psal. lxxii. ver. 7 to the end, was sung. When the first of these candidates for holy Baptism kneeled down, we sang Psal. lxxii. ver. 5. At the kneeling down of the second, we joined in that verse of the Evening Hymn—"Were we found sprinkled with thy blood," &c. The third kneeled down under the last verse of the same Hymn: and the fourth under the words—"Come Jesus make my sins to vanish." These verses were sung while they were on their knees, in order to receive the covenant seal of Baptism, the Minister laying his hands on their heads. The Ordinance having been administered, the Apostolic benediction was pronounced over each of them, singly. The following Christians were witnesses of the sacred transaction: J. Scholtz, C. Botma, Stephen Botma, Gerrit Maritz, and John Van de Werhuisen. Service being over, we had a Love-Feast together with our new brethren and sisters, being desirous to intimate that all the distinction which had before subsisted between them and us was now at an end, and that we should consider one another as members of Christ, supported by the same spiritual food.

In the evening of the same

day we celebrated the Lord's Supper, when I discoursed on Rom. viii. 31—34, and there was much life perceivable among us. Our new brethren and sisters from among the heathen, partook of the sacred emblems with us, and we, through grace, felt perfectly united with them. The hymn was Psalm lxviii. 10. During the celebration of the ordinance, the High-Priestly-prayer of our Lord, in John xvii. with part of John vi. and Isaiah lv. assisted our devotion.

The conversion of these poor heathen was scarcely so surprising to us, as the cordial union of so many Christians with us in these exercises, though so contrary to their former customs and prejudices. But he who has the hearts of all men in his hand, convinced us that nothing is too hard for him, and caused them not only not to oppose our proceedings, but to manifest the spirit of brotherly love.*

* Mr. K. informs us, that the Dutch Colonists differ much in their moral character, and in their disposition towards the Missionary cause. "The more moral and serious," said he, "gave me every assistance in their power, and I can never be sufficiently thankful for it. Those who opposed us were generally uncivilized and ungodly men, who were led astray by our enemies, and pretended to suspect me of political views. The better sort of the Settlers instruct their Hottentots and their Slaves, and through their instrumentality, some have been savingly converted. But those Farmers who are notoriously wicked, are afraid that the heathen will become too wise by instruction, and so reprove them for their wicked works."

It may here be observed, that the Hottentots are not slaves; they receive wages for their labor, more or less,

After the Baptismal service, I went round, and shook hands with each of them, in the name of Jesus, to bid them welcome into his Church, as my dearly beloved friends. All the Christians present, joined in expressions congratulatory, and full of tender affection; the women embracing their sisters, and crying out—"God is performing wonders, in these days, in this dry desert! Ah! what times do we live in! How great is the Lord's loving-kindness, who reveals himself to such poor blind creatures!" Every one present was strongly affected; and the Lord himself was surely in the midst of us. As to my own feelings—I cannot express them. My thoughts, on this occasion, were too many to be counted. I could do nothing but weep, or speak broken words of love and praise, when I considered what the Lord had done

as they live near the Cape or farther distant, or as laborers happen to be scarce, or the work heavy. Near the Cape, they get from five to eight Rix dollars for one journey to Cape Town; in the back Settlements, from six to eight sheep per year. Most Hottentots hire themselves out for a year; but the Colonists, under various pretences, attempt to keep them beyond their time, if they stand in need of them. Severe floggings are given on such occasions by unjust masters; but, on the other hand, some of the Hottentots are so rude and refractory, that they deserve very severe correction.

Few, among the smaller hordes of Hottentots, have any Chief. If there be a Captain, his power is regulated by his personal strength. He may flog a man who is weaker than himself; but he is content merely to scowl at a stronger rebel or malefactor. They have no laws, but every Chief follows the dictates of his own will.

among these people, by me, his poor unprofitable servant; and how my eyes now beheld that happy time for which I had longed so much, for which I had so repeatedly and fervently prayed. Things that once seemed to me next to impossible, were now realized. I was overwhelmed with wonder and gratitude while we were singing Psalm lxxii. 5. "The desolate nation shall kneel before thee." (Dutch Version) I was constrained to cry—"Yes, thou God of truth, this thou hast shewn to us, and art still shewing to us. Here are the desolate people before thee, to make a tender of their hearts, surrendering themselves for ever to thee, O King Jesus, who hast shed

The Boschemen are rarely without a Chief, who is generally the most cunning or the most daring among his Banditti. His merit lies in being the most bloody murderer among his gang, whom he never punishes for their crimes; but if a man has let slip a favorable opportunity of killing a Farmer or a Hottentot, the Chief is sure to call him to an account. In support of his authority, he is sometimes obliged to fight with his own people; who kill him without being punished, except by the relations of the deceased, who are strictly "the avengers of blood," and who pursue the murderer through rivers and over mountains till they find him.

A circumstance, descriptive of their cruelty to their children, which was omitted in its proper place, may be here inserted. Mr. Kicherer says, "A little while before I left the Great River, I saved the life of a boy, fifteen years old, whom the Corannas were going to drown." But he adds—"Enough of this; my soul shudders at the recollection of all these scenes of inhumanity, owing to the ignorance of these wretched people."

"thy blood for them, as a ran-
 "som for their sins. O my God,
 "who didst say to me, Go out
 "from thy country and thy fam-
 "ily into a land which I shall
 "shew thee, eternal thanks be
 "to thee from the bottom of
 "my heart. Thou hast shewn
 "great faithfulness to me thy
 "servant, and my eyes have seen
 "thy salvation. Thou hast trans-
 "formed the wilderness into a
 "fruitful field, and the dry plac-
 "es into pools of water. Ac-
 "complish thy promises, that
 "the enemies of thy cross may
 "see, that Jehovah's wonder-
 "working hand hath done this.
 "Gird me and all thy servants
 "with strength to combat the old
 "Dragon and his power, to take
 "the spoil from the strong, prov-
 "ing more than conquerors.
 "O thou great Fore-runner,
 "bless our poor services, and ex-
 "ert thy power still more and
 "more, for we expect greater
 "things than these ; Come Lord
 "Jesus, Amen."

When leaving the Chapel, it
 was pleasing to observe, how the
 poor Hottentots congratulated
 the new brethren and sisters ;
 and how they encouraged them
 to live henceforth entirely to the
 Lord Jesus Christ. One, in par-
 ticular, embracing his newly
 baptized friend, exclaimed,—
 "Ah ! my dear brother, let go
 "the world and its allurements ;
 "they are crucified to thee by
 "the death of Christ ; live and
 "suffer henceforth for him,
 "keeping in remembrance your
 "vows, and the holy Tri-une
 "God will make good his prom-
 "ises to you ; now you have
 "nothing to do but to ask, and
 "he will give you all you want."

At the close of this, as on all
 sacred days, it was truly affect-

ing to behold the whole congre-
 gation, immediately after ser-
 vice, dispersing over the fields
 and hills, in order to meditate
 and pray over what they had
 heard and enjoyed. I give them
 the example, and they all follow
 me. Wherever I go, I meet
 with stragglers, engaged in soli-
 tary meditation, or lying on the
 ground, behind the bushes, or
 between the clefts of rocks, pour-
 ing out their souls to God in
 prayer.

On the Lord's day no attention
 is paid to worldly business : from
 morning to evening, the whole
 time is employed in religious
 exercises, public or private. No
 victuals is dressed till after the
 last public service ; nor are any
 persons seen loitering about ;
 the people of the settlement have
 but one business on that day, and
 that business is the service of
 God.

On the 25th of December,
 1802, we had another Baptismal
 Solemnity. On the 22d, a num-
 ber of Christians and Heathens
 arrived from various parts, to
 witness the pleasing transaction ;
 and we rejoiced together under
 the influence of Divine Grace
 and Christian affection.

On the 24th all the Adults,
 who were to be baptized, namely,
 four men and twelve women,
 made their confession of faith,
 to the astonishment and confu-
 sion of many Christians, as they
 frankly owned. After this, some
 questions were put to the chil-
 dren, which they answered ex-
 ceedingly well. Among others
 a little girl, between eight and
 nine years old, spoke for half an
 hour, without intermission, and
 with great propriety. This con-
 fession took up eight hours and
 a half. It was introduced by

singing the 98th Psalm ; and the attention of the congregation was relieved by verses, interspersed, of the Hymn—"O Zion's King, God's only Son," &c.*

On the next day, at ten o'clock, the solemn service began. The Christians vied with each other, in offering to stand witnesses to the Baptism of the children of this new congregation. I preached on Rom. v. 1, 2, concluding with an appropriate address, in which I called on the adults to put off the old man, or the corrupt principles of their sinful nature, and to put on the Lord Jesus. The sacrament of Baptism was then administered, first to the adults, and next to the children, (twenty-seven in number) the fathers holding them on their knees, and the mothers bringing their babes in their arms. We then sang our favorite Hymn—"O Zion's King, &c." In the evening we sat down to a Love-feast, and afterwards to the Holy Communion. I concluded the day by preaching on Rom. viii. 1, 2. It was a blessed season, our young Christians joining with us in brotherly fellowship, and partaking in our blessings. I was much fatigued, but the Lord strengthened me.

It was my intention not to baptize any more persons, till I should return from Europe ; for I had now resolved upon going thither, partly for the sake of my drooping health, partly on account of some important domestic concerns, and also with a view of consulting the Directors of the Missionary Society in

London, on the best means to be adopted in future. But the greater part of the people who had continued with me from the beginning, came to me daily, expressing their earnest desire of receiving this token of the Covenant, for, they said, they also wished to be the servants of Jesus, declaring that they saw no other way of escaping from the wrath to come, but by the vicarious sacrifice of the Son of God. Having selected from among them such as appeared to me most fit to receive this seal of Covenant love, I baptized, on the 15th of January, 1803, three men, seven women, and twenty-four of their children. The joy was great and sincere. Those who had formerly been baptized, were exhorted to reconsider their obligations, as well as their privileges. This took place only two days before my departure from Zak River, so that we had not opportunity of rendering it so public, or so solemn ; nevertheless, the impression it left on all minds was very deep and desirable. Thus I left eighty-three baptized Heathen at the Settlement, the whole population being about six hundred.—So far the Dutch Account.

In the course of the year 1802, I had an agreeable visit from Brother John Kock, who, with three of his Bootsuannas, (one of them a Chief, called Perry) and their families, had travelled to Cape Town. John Kock related a fact, which is certainly remarkable. He preached to the natives, (who are a more intelligent race of men than the Hottentots) the leading doctrines of the Christian faith ; but, for some time, to no visible purpose.

* See a Translation of this Hymn, from the Dutch, in the Evangelical Magazine for December, 1803.

But on a certain night, which was very rainy, a Bootsuanna being in the fields, and not succeeding in making a fire, by the usual method of rubbing two sticks together, it came into his mind that he would pray to Jesus, whom he had heard could answer the petitions of his people; when, to his great surprise, the very next attempt proved successful. This singular circumstance impressed his mind, and induced him to become more attentive to the preaching of the Gospel; he began to discover the necessity of experimental religion, and there was reason to hope that the spark which was kindled in his mind would never be extinguished. Oh, the condescending love of God to poor blind creatures!

Perry conceived a strong affection for me, and asked a number of pertinent questions, such as, Whether the baptismal water differed in its nature from that of the rivers of Caffraria? Whether Jesus was the Saviour of Caffres as well as of Hottentots? How he could be God and man at the same time? He pressed me hard to go with him to his own country, promising that he would prepare every thing for my reception, and assuring me that he should esteem that day the happiest of his life when he should see me arrive at his Kraal. He even offered to go with me over the Great Water.

About the same time, I enjoyed an agreeable visit from Brother Anderson, who informed me that every thing went on well at the Great River, and that the work of the Lord prospered much in those parts.

On the 17th of January, 1803,
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I took leave of my dear affectionate people at Zak River,* and proceeded to Cape Town, in order to take my passage for Europe. After trying in vain, for some time, to procure a passage in a Dutch vessel, I was obliged, at last, to go on board a Dane. On the south of the Equinoctial, the wind was generally favorable; but after we had crossed it, we met with adverse winds which took us far out of our proper course. At length, we spoke with a ship, which communicated to us the distressing news that the war had again broken out; in consequence of this information we steered round Scotland, towards Norway, where we made a harbor, in which we were glad to find a shelter from the very heavy gales. From

* Mr. K.'s parting was very affecting. The poor people wept bitterly. They laid hold on his hands and said they could not let him go. They said they would pray to God to bring him back soon; they thought they should die if he did not return. They expressed their apprehension that it was on account of their guilt, and because they had not sufficiently prized the ministry of the Gospel, that they must be deprived of it. A gentleman who saw them after Mr. K.'s departure said that no person must now mention his name to them, and that if any one happened to do so they would be extremely affected and weep much.

Mr. K. left the congregation under the care of Mr. Botman, a worthy pious man, a native who had been a Farmer. But being determined to devote himself to the service of Christ and souls, he had sold all his goods and become a preacher of the Gospel.

Mr. K. left them with the assurance that he would return to them, if possible, in the course of a year, or little more. He left London, Dec. 21, for Holland, expecting a passage from thence to the Cape very shortly.

thence we proceeded, July 16th, to the Texel, in the very entrance of which we were examined by an English Cruiser. I committed myself to Him, who never failed to be a refuge for me in the day of trouble, and he delivered us; for though the captain of the vessel examined our papers, which certainly proved us the fairest prize imaginable, he suffered us to proceed. We knew not how to account for his generosity, as every fishing boat was taken by the British: however, we were thankful to the Lord who had brought us safely to the place of our destination, we being the only ship of all those which left the Cape with us, that reached the Mother Country.

Death of Dr. Priestly.

The following account of the death of this well known character, has been inserted in the Philadelphia Gazette.

SINCE his illness at Philadelphia, in the year 1801, Dr. Priestly never regained his former state of health. His complaint was constant indigestion, and a difficulty of swallowing food of any kind. But during this period of general debility, he was busily employed in printing his Church History, and the first volume of his notes on the scriptures, and in making new and original experiments. During this period, likewise, he wrote his pamphlet of Jesus and Socrates compared, and reprinted his Essay on Phlogiston.

“From about the beginning of November, 1803, to the mid-

dle of January, 1804, his complaint grew more serious; yet by judicious medical treatment, and strict attention to diet, he, after some time, seemed, if not gaining strength, at least not getting worse; and his friends fondly hoped that his health would continue to improve as the season advanced. He, however, considered his life as very precarious. Even at this time, besides his miscellaneous reading, which was at all times very extensive, he read through all the works quoted in his “Comparison of the different Systems of the Grecian Philosophers with Christianity;” composed that work, and transcribed the whole of it, in less than three months; so that he has left it ready for the press. During this period he composed, in *one day*, his Second Reply to Dr. Linn.

“In the last fortnight of January, his fits of indigestion became more alarming, his legs swelled and his weakness increased. Within two days of his death, he became so weak that he could walk but a little way, and that with great difficulty: for some time he found himself unable to speak; but, on recovering a little, he told his friends that he had never felt more pleasantly during his whole life-time, than during the time he was unable to speak. He was fully sensible that he had not long to live, yet talked with cheerfulness to all who called on him. In the course of the day, he expressed his thankfulness at being permitted to die quietly in his family without pain, and with every convenience and comfort that he could wish for. He dwelt upon the peculiarly happy situation in which it had pleased the Di-

vine Being to place him in life, and the great advantage he had enjoyed in the acquaintance and friendship of some of the best and wisest of men of the age in which he lived, and the satisfaction he derived from having led an useful as well as happy life. He this day gave directions about printing the remainder of his notes on the Scriptures (a work, in the completion of which he was much interested,) and looked over the first sheet of the third volume, after it was corrected by those who were to attend to its completion, and expressed his satisfaction at the manner of its being executed.

"On Sunday the 5th he was much weaker, but sat up in an arm chair for a few minutes. He desired that John, ch. xi. might be read to him; he stopped the reader at the forty-fifth verse, dwelt for some time on the advantage he had derived from reading the scriptures daily, and recommended this practice.— "We shall all (said he) meet finally; we only require different degrees of discipline suited to our different tempers, to prepare us for final happiness."— Mr. — coming into his room, he said, "You see, Sir, I am still living." Mr. — observed, "that he would always live.— "Yes, I believe I shall; we shall meet again in another and a better world." He said this with great animation, laying hold of Mr. —'s hand in both his own. After evening prayers, when his grand-children were brought to his bed-side, he spake to them separately, and exhorted them to continue to love each other, &c. "I am going (added he) to sleep as well as you; for death is only a good long sound sleep in

the grave, and we shall meet again."

"On Monday morning, the 9th of February, on being asked how he did, he answered in a faint voice, that he had no pain, but appeared fainting away gradually. About eight o'clock he desired to have three pamphlets which had been looked out by his directions the evening before. He then dictated as clearly and distinctly as he had ever done in his life, the additions and alterations which he wished to have done in each. M—— took down the substance of what he said, which was read to him. He observed, "Sir, you have put in your own language; I wish it to be *mine*." He then repeated over again, nearly word for word, what he had before said, and when it was transcribed, and read over to him, he said, "That is right; I have now done."

"About half an hour after he desired that he might be removed to a cot. About ten minutes after he was removed to it, he died; but breathed his last so easily that those who were sitting close to him did not immediately perceive it. He had put his hand to his face, which prevented them from observing it.

"He was born March 24, 1733.

—
The following remarks on the preceding account of Dr. Priestly, are extracted from the Christian Observer.

SUCH is the account inserted, as it should seem, by the Doctor's friends, of his last moments. It evinces great composure and tranquillity, a vigor of mind and industry unabated by disease, and a confidence in the truth of

the religious principles he professed. We think it our duty, however, to caution the younger part of our readers against confounding the soundness of principles with the sincerity with which they are believed, or considering the composure which any principles inspire as a proof of their truth. Too much stress has, we apprehend, been laid by all parties on the firmness with which their respective adherents have met their last hour. Composure in that awful moment may arise from various and even opposite causes. Natural fortitude, a habit of great submission to what is inevitable, a morbid insensibility, a regard to decorum, and even to posthumous character, will produce it. Still more frequently will it originate in ignorance of the guilt of sin, and of the purity of the divine nature, in habitual insensibility of conscience, or in a self-righteous confidence. In a word, let a high idea of the mercy of God, without regard to his justice, be combined with a low standard of morals, and the result, in almost every case, will be an exemption from uneasiness respecting a future state. Hence we may account for the similar indifference which persons of very different religious systems have exhibited at the prospect of death. The soldier braves its approach, the savage exults in its tortures, the enthusiast greets it with rapture. Hume was sportive in his last hours, and Rousseau* contemplated his dissolution

with pleasure. It is remarkable, that the scripture no where lays any stress upon the feelings which distinguish the hour of death, or holds up any remarkable example of a death-bed scene, as a model for imitation, or a proof of true religion. In fact, its great aim is to direct the attention to a proof far less equivocal than feelings dependent upon circumstances; the tenor of a holy life spent in conformity to the word of God. An erroneous idea is also frequently entertained concerning the true nature of a Christian departure. Mere tranquillity, nay, abounding hope and triumphant assurance, form, of themselves, no just and clear indication of the right state of the soul. A different standard of excellence, or proof of the reality of religion, must not be assumed for the hour of death from that which was justly laid down for the vigor of health. In both seasons it is not the excellence of one grace or virtue, which stamps the character, but rather the possession of all, the uniform and complete conformity of the tempers and conduct to the delineation of them exhibited in the scripture. Upon a death-bed, therefore, no peculiar or new

blackest vice, says, in that very work which contains a confession of his crimes, that no man can come to the throne of God, and say, *I am a better man than Rousseau*. And just before he expired, he observed to his mistress, "Ah! my dear, how happy a thing it is to die when one has no reason for remorse or self-reproach!" Then addressing himself to the Almighty, he said, "Eternal Being! the soul that I am going to give thee back, is as pure, at this moment, as it was when it proceeded from thee; render it partaker of thy felicity."

* Rousseau, the hardened villany of whose life is almost without parallel in modern times, and who seems to have assumed the mask of virtue for no other purpose, than that of propagating, with more success, the

graces are called into action ; but the solemnity of the circumstances, and the greatness of the occasion, will heighten and exalt them all. Not only should faith be more lively than usual, or hope be elevated to assurance, but repentance ought to be deeper, humility more profound, charity more fervent and extensive, resignation more perfect, love to God of a purer kind, and obedience to his will more conspicuous. Judging by this rule, we confess that we are not entirely satisfied with the frame of mind the Doctor appeared to possess as far as we can judge of it from the narrative of his friends. We could wish to have heard the language of humiliation, and should have been glad to perceive the traces of a reverential awe at the prospect of appearing before the judge of the earth. Such just and suitable feelings have marked, and we may truly add, adorned the closing scene of some of the wisest*

* The dying expressions of Hooker occurring to us while we were writing this paragraph, we insert them in this note, not as exhibiting the best illustration which might be found of the last moments of an excellent man, but as sufficiently expressing that general assemblage of Christian dispositions on which we have insisted.

"After receiving the blessed sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord, his friend Dr. Saravia, who attended him, thought he saw a reverend gaiety and joy in his face ; but it lasted not long, for his bodily infirmities did return suddenly, and became more visible, insomuch that the Doctor apprehended death ready to seize him. Yet after some amendment, he left him at night with a promise to return early the day following, which he did, and then found him better in appearance, deep in contemplation, and not inclinable to discourse, which gave the Doctor occasion to

and best of men. It would have given us pleasure also to have heard the promises of the gospel urged to cheer the fainting spirits, to confirm the doubting mind, and to encourage the well-founded expectations of penitence and faith. Above all, we looked with earnest desire (and we deeply regret our disappointment) to have seen the mention of that adorable name, which, unto all who believe, is precious

require his present thoughts ; to which he replied, *'That he was meditating the number and nature of angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace could not be in heaven ; and, oh ! that it might be so on earth.'* After which words, he said, *'I have lived to see this world is made up of perturbations, and I have been long preparing to leave it, and gathering comfort for the dreadful hour of making my account with God, which I now apprehend to be near : and though I have by his grace, loved him in my youth, and feared him in mine age, and labored to have a conscience void of offence to him and to all men ; yet if thou, O Lord, be extreme to mark what I have done amiss who can abide it ; and, therefore, where I have failed, Lord, shew mercy to me, for I plead not my righteousness but the forgiveness of my unrighteousness, for his merits who died to purchase a pardon for penitent sinners : and since I owe thee a death, Lord let it not be terrible, and then take thine own time. I submit to it. Let not mine, O Lord, but let thy will be done.'* With which expression he fell into a dangerous slumber, dangerous as to his recovery ; yet recover he did, but it was to speak only these few words—*'Good Doctor, God hath heard my daily petitions, for I am at peace with all men, and he is at peace with me, and from which blessed assurance I feel that inward joy which this world can neither give nor take from me.'* More he would have spoken, but his spirits failed him ; and after a short conflict betwixt nature and death, a quiet sigh put a period to his last breath, and so he fell asleep."—Walton's Life of Hooker.

above every name that is named in heaven or in earth. It could not, indeed, have been introduced, according to the Doctor's system, as the foundation of hope, but it might, one would conceive, according to any system which professes to be built upon the scriptures, have been mentioned with that affection, veneration, and gratitude with which the inspired writers, as well as good men in every age, have uniformly spoken of it.

As a substitute for that ancient foundation of hope, faith in the atonement of the Son of God, the Doctor rests upon the expectation of universal salvation. This is well calculated, we acknowledge, to allay apprehension. Indeed, there cannot be much ground for alarm, when it is believed that there is no worm which dieth not, and no fire that is not quenched. It is very consoling to look upon God as only preparing all his creatures for final happiness, by different degrees of discipline suited to their different tempers.—The encouragement this idea holds out is of a very general and extensive kind; for it affords hope alike to all, and nearly annihilates all distinction of character. But our readers will, probably, agree with us that it is a ground of hope never mentioned by the inspired writers; that the great founder of our religion evidently directed the weight of his influence to establish a contrary belief, and that whoever rests upon it, must deny or explain away the obvious declarations of scripture. We are told, indeed, that the Doctor diligently perused the sacred writings; but we feel our confidence in this mark of regard for

those holy volumes much diminished, by reflecting on the unwarrantable liberties he was accustomed to take with them, on his rejection of the authority of an evangelist, on his denial of the conclusiveness of the arguments of an apostle, on the ingenuity exercised to explain away the obvious sense, or the boldness with which he refused to submit to the plain declarations of scripture. The mere study of scripture is of little moment compared with the humility with which its dictates are received, and the ready submission of the mind to its authority.

Indeed we conceive, that the leading defect in the Doctor's mind, from the first, was a want of humility. He formed his system from his own reasoning, and then endeavored to accommodate the scripture to it, instead of humbly receiving his creed from scripture and casting down every imagination of his mind which opposed it. This was his fundamental error, and it naturally led him to cherish a spirit of rash innovation, inconsistent with cool deliberation or sound judgment. Yielding himself to the influence of this spirit, he trampled with disdain upon the bounds which the wisdom and piety of former ages had fixed.

That the Doctor was sincere in the principles he held we doubt not, and that his principles were calculated to free his mind from alarming apprehensions, and produce tranquillity at the hour of death, we readily allow. But God forbid we should consider this as any evidence of their truth. By their conformity to scripture, and by the fruits they produce, they

must be tried. It is useful also to remark, that in judging of the fruits which any principles produce, we must take our examples from the general cast of those who hold them, not from the solitary instances of the leaders of a party. The latter necessarily feel the influence of other considerations. Epicurus himself was sober and temperate, though his principles led to intemperance, and his disciples were generally corrupt. It is necessary also to examine the nature of the fruits which any principles produce, by the rules which scripture has laid down. They must be the fruits of Christian holiness. Are the Socinians, taken as a body, the most humble of those who bear the Christian name? Are they the most devout, the most heavenly-minded, the most watchful against sin? By the answer to these questions, should their pretensions be determined as far as the moral effect of principles determines their truth.

It is with reluctance we speak of any persons who have gone to give their account to their Judge, in a manner which may seem disrespectful to them.—The importance, however, of the truth will, we trust, justify the freedom of our remarks on this well known person. We should have rejoiced to have recorded in these pages the edifying example of the departure of a Christian divine, rather than, what appears to us, the tranquil death of a mere philosopher.

A HYMN TO JESUS,

Sung by the Hottentots.—See this Magazine, page 472.

(Translated from the Dutch.)

O ZION's King! thou Son of God,
Exalted on thy Father's throne!
Behold the purchase of thy blood;
On thy dear bride look gently down!

Far from thyself, her Head, her Lord,
Her Life, her Love, for thee she longs!

Oh, come and speak some cheering word,

And soon her sighs shall turn to songs!

Forget not souls still dead in sin,
For whom thy precious blood was shed:

Oh, let them feel a life divine,
Thy mighty pow'r can raise the dead!

Now let thy glory be display'd,—
Now cause the deaf thy voice to hear;

That it of Zion may be said,
"This and that man was born in her."

Fountain of Life! Almighty God!
Thy Spirit's influence impart!
Oh, shed thy precious love abroad,
And let it soften ev'ry heart!

Bring Tyrians, Philistines, and Moors,
In the right way thy face to seek:
Let Satan fall, while Heav'n adores,
And the whole earth thy praise shall speak!

Donations to the Missionary Society of Connecticut.

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10.	A Friend of Missions,	-	-	5 58
	Ladies Society, New-Haven,	-	-	10
20.	A Friend of Missions, Berlin,	-	-	10
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J Brainerd

